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[From the Musical World, London.]

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF GENIUS.

MASTERS CHARLES AND ARTHUR LE JEUNE.

Since the creation of Mr. Dickens's infant phenomenon, and that preternatural accession of wisdom to all persons, young and old, which prohibits their being struck overmuch by anything, there has been a general consent to depreciate very early manifestations of intellectual power in that direction. And it is true, no doubt, as a general rule, that great precocity carries with it a serious threat to the growth of mature power. But such a general consideration ought not to interfere with the appreciation of a very exceptional faculty in young children when it exists in a shape that seems to announce the presence of rare and original genius. Sufficient for the day is so very good a thing as that we ought to take the delight of it as it stands by itself, without too anxiously speculating as to the future fortunes of its intellectual growth. We have had the felicity of falling in with two examples of this rare and precious light of exceptional genius and power in the two really wonderful children whose names are at the head of this notice. And we we cannot but esteem ourselves as fortunate in being among the first to announce to those who take a deep interest in the divine art of music, in its highest developments, the accession of promise and power which the musical world has just received. The two brothers of whom we speak are aged respectively twelve and eleven years; and while they have exhibited from babyhood all those signs of musical genius which have been familiar to us all in the biographies of the greatest musical names, their music faculties have of late taken a direction and exhibited itself in so exceptional a manner as to place them in a category of faculty and achievement quite exceptional, and, we believe, unprecedented.

The first opportunity which the public has had of making its acquaintance with the powers and performance of these children was on Tuesday last, when a very large circle of distinguished musical professors and amateurs were invited to the establishment of Messrs. Bishop and Starr, to hear them upon an organ which that firm has just completed for the church of Handsworth. Besides works of considerable interest by Wéber and Mendelssohn, the programme comprised four of the greatest and most elaborate of the pedal fugues of Bach; the one known as St. Anne's, the C major, the D major, and the well-known great fantasia and fugue in G minor. Only skilled musicians will enter into the full significance, as to musical ability, of the fact which, but for the evidence of our own eyes, we should have been inclined to discredit that these were children who played these works—the most sublime, the most complex in the whole range of music—not only without book, but with a precision in the rendering, a fire and depth in the interpretation, an appreciation of the contrapuntal and imaginative side of these incomparable productions, which have probably never been surpassed. The great peculiarity, as yet without precedent, so far as we know, of these brothers is, that they, in fact, seem to have been born at that stage of musical development which even the highest genius has hitherto only reached after years of painful study. We have made it our business to inquire somewhat minutely into the circumstances of their musical growth, and these are so remarkable as to require mention. With regard, for example, to one of the most elaborate of these great fugues, it is the fact that the younger of the children before his last birthday, when only ten years old, had it given to him for the first time on the Wednesday of last Easter week, and played it through without book to his father on the following Friday morning—that is to say, with the study of only a day and a half! Such a faculty as this, of absorbing at once into the system, and giving out again with the highest interpretation and execution, the most elaborate contrapuntal works in the art, at so tender an age, does indeed strike us

as being altogether a novel and unprecedented thing, and to deserve an attention and study different from, and quite beyond, the superficial wonder and interest evoked by the ordinary achievements of precocious childhood; for in their performance of this great music, both these children of tender age show not the promise of childhood, but the performance of maturity.

It is impossible not to indulge in anticipations of the very highest musical future, and one of deep interest to the world of art, from the curious relation of the musical systems of these really wonderful boys to this unapproachable music of "Old Bach." When hearing them execute these *chef d'œuvres* of science and thought (as it has been our privilege to do on the public occasion we mention, and also in private) with a fire and force and steadiness, and always without book, and so as to produce on the mind the irresistible impression that they were not so much playing remembered music as positively reconstructing it in their minds, it is impossible for us not to form sanguine expectations of what these children may do hereafter as creators of equivalent art. But remembering the gentle protestation against such speculation with which we began, we will not indulge in such anticipations, natural as they are.

It is scarcely necessary for us to say that the performance of these boys produced a deep and unusual impression upon the auditory, an expression heightened by the extreme delicacy and fragility of their appearance, and by that sort of utter absorption in the works they were interpreting, and indifference to the presence of a large body of hearers, which is one of the most decisive signs of real greatness of musical faculty in an executant. The programme of Tuesday was repeated at the same place on Thursday, and we cannot but hope that the public may, henceforward, have occasional opportunities of witnessing and enjoying the performance of these singularly gifted children; while we must at the same time take the opportunity of expressing a hope that everybody in any way responsible for their lives and fortunes may bear in mind that genius of so profound and exceptional an order as appears to exist in both these boys, may be so precious a thing in its ultimate development as to make it a matter of duty that the promise of the future may not be jeopardized by too premature a ripening, however exquisite to friends and audiences, of its early fruit.

## PAGANINI'S CABRIOLET.

Many writers, in their articles on Paganini, the wonderful violinist, have stated that that eminent man had received a brilliant education, that he spoke and wrote with singular felicity all the living languages. This is not the fact. Paganini spoke and wrote but one language, and that was Italian. During the latter part of his sojourn at Paris, he succeeded in comprehending a little of that language, but he never spoke it with facility. The pronunciation he found extremely difficult; and, strange to say, his memory failed in the most simple idiom, although so unerringly accurate in everything relating to music. In Germany, Paganini had the name of being remarkably avaricious, and of pretending to be ignorant of the language, in order to avoid the importunities of servants, who besieged him with demands before and after his concerts. This is a mere fabrication of German scribblers.

The illustrious violinist always preferred conversing with those who spoke Italian. When he met with persons of his own country, his spirits became elated, his manner lively, and his conversation most animated and entertaining. He was wont, in these happy hours of relaxation, to recount many amusing adventures, of which he was the hero. Thus we have heard him repeat the

following anecdote, which, although simple in itself, yet coming from his lips, had an interest and charm almost incredible:

I was walking one day in the streets of Vienna," he began. "I had not long quitted my hotel, and was quietly strolling without any object in view, and deeply engaged in admiring the fine heads of the Austrians, when a storm, without any previous notice, overtook me. I was alone, and that was rarely the case. To return to the hotel was my first impulse; but, on reflection, I was determined to take a cabriolet. I stopped three successively, but the conductors not understanding the language in which I spoke, passed on without heeding me. A fourth came in view: the rain was falling in torrents, and the weather becoming frightful. I now bailed the coachman most lustily; he understood me at once; he was Italian—a true Italian. Before mounting I wished to make a price with him, and, therefore, asked how much he would take to drive me to the hotel.

"Five florins," he replied. "The price of a ticket of admission to Paganini's concert."

"Rogue, that you are," I replied, how dare you exact such a price for so short a distance? Paganini plays upon a single string, but you—can you make your cabriolet go with only one wheel? Out upon you, I say."

"Well, sir, it is not as difficult as he pretends, to play upon a single string. I am a musician myself, for which reason I have doubled my fares, in order that I may be enabled to go and see the man they call Paganini."

I bargained no longer. In less than ten minutes we arrived at the door of my hotel. I took five florins from my purse, and a ticket for the concert out of my pocket-book.

"There is the sum that you have demanded," I said to the coachman, "and here is a ticket to go and hear this M. Paganini, at a concert he is about giving at the Philharmonic Saloon."

The next evening, at about eight o'clock, the crowds pressed eagerly at the doors of the saloon where I was to play. I was about entering, when a policeman called to me, saying that there was a man in a jacket\* at the door, and notwithstanding his unsuitable clothing, he was persisting, by main force, in getting admission.

I followed the policeman. It was the coachman of the preceding day, who, asserting the right which I had given him, presented his ticket, and insisted on being admitted, stating at the same time, that he was made a present of the ticket, and that they dare not refuse to receive it.

I opened the door for him, and notwithstanding his jacket and heavy, dirty shoes, allowed him to enter, feeling assured that he would be in a moment lost in the crowd, and therefore not observable. To my great astonishment, the moment I presented myself on the stage, I perceived before me the coachman, whose appearance produced a most extraordinary sensation, in consequence of the contrast he presented to the brilliant and splendidly dressed company present, the ladies being in full dress, and the gentlemen correspondingly attired.

My performance was received with a rapture, and applauded with enthusiasm; but, the man in the dirty jacket obtained equal publicity and attention. He clapped his hands furiously, and in the midst of my most brilliant passages, when all

\*To many of the European concerts, no one can obtain admittance without being suitably dressed, even if he has purchased a ticket.

the rest of the company were silently listening, he would roar out at the top of voice, "Bravo," "Beautiful," "Paganinni is the man," and such like exclamations.

His gestures, his cries, his applauses, more like a person delirious than anything else, caused the observation of the company as much as his burlesque attire. How thankful I was when the performance was concluded, for I feared a row, from the offensive displays of the poor coachman's enthusiasm.

The next morning whilst at breakfast, I was informed that a man wished to speak with me, who would not give his name; and as I took some time to consider the request, I saw coming into the room the same man who had shown such hilarity at my concert. My first impulse was to throw him down stairs; but when I saw his humble and respectful demeanor I repressed my indignation.

"Well, what now?" I inquired of him, rather impatiently.

"Your honor, I have come to demand a service, a great service of you," he replied, bowing low. "I am the father of six children. I am poor, and I am your countryman. You are rich, your reputation is unequalled; if you will, you can make my fortune."

"In what way?" asked.

"By authorizing me to have painted in large characters behind my cabriolet the two words—PAGANINI'S CABRIOLET."

This man was neither a fool nor a madman. In a few months he was better known in Vienna than I was myself. With this inscription, which I did not forbid him using, he made a considerable fortune. Two years after I returned to Vienna; the coachman had purchased the hotel at which I had descended with a part of the money earned by his cabriolet. His fortune was made, and he sold the reversion of his cabriolet for the enormous sum of fifty thousand francs.

(From the Berlin Echo.)

#### A VISIT TO THE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AT NAPLES.

It was very important for me to become acquainted with the long-celebrated school of Music in Naples. While in Rome, I obtained a letter of recommendation to the professor of the violin at the institution in question, Signor Pinto, who has, also, to play in Naples generally the part of the first violinist, or, as we say in Germany, *Concertmeister*. I fancied that, thus provided, I should early obtain admission to the school. But the matter was attended with especial difficulties. In the first place, Signor Pinto was nowhere to be found, a very characteristic trait, it struck me, of Neapolitan life. I went to the Teatro S. Carlo, to enquire of the hall-keeper the artist's address, as I knew Signor Pinto was attached to the establishment. The hall-keeper intimated to me, in a kindly and compassionate tone, that I should have some trouble in presenting my letter, "for," he said, "you will not find Signor Pinto at home. - You may, however, come across him at Catilisch's *pasticceria*, in the Toledo," (the principal street of Naples,) "for, as a rule, he looks in two or three times a day." My laudible attempt to catch the much-desired violinist there was, however, not crowned with success. Somewhat dispirited, I returned to my friend the hall-keeper at San Carlo, and begged him to put me in the way of pouncing upon Signor Pinto somehow or other. "Oh," replied he, very sensibly, "go to the Conservatory during the time the professor is delivering his lesson there." He told me, also, the exact hours when the object of my search was engaged in his pro-

fessional duties, and I took advantage of the first morning at my disposal to carry out my purpose. On entering the precincts of the Conservatory, which is located in the Franciscan Monastery of S. Pietro a Majella, I was astonished by a scene which produced upon me an effect as unusual as truly comic. In a spacious corridor, between 250 and 300 feet long, on the first floor, I found a number of the youthful pupils of the institution, clad, despite the lateness of the hour—it was ten o'clock—in the most daring morning costume, practicing their various instruments, some of the pupils walking up and down while so engaged. Wind and string instruments, of various kinds and calibres, combined their sounds in a harmless melody. Runs, scales, sustained notes, etc., vibrated through the air and my nerves, which latter were already rather strongly affected by the noise of the Neapolitan streets. But the hopeful and youthful assembly were not disturbed in their experimental music by the arrival of a stranger, who, as they could easily perceive, was a foreigner, perfectly astonished at what he beheld. More especially impressed upon my memory are the performers on a bass trombone and a double bass. They extracted from their instruments such prodigious tones, that it seemed as though they had to prepare for playing at the Resurrection.

I slipped into a side-corridor, and met one of the servants of the establishment, whom I begged to take me to Sig. Pinto. He expressed his regret at not being able to gratify my wish, because Sig. Pinto had not yet arrived, though his hour had struck. In order to escape from the musical hubbub I have described, I asked to be conducted to the Librarian of the Conservatory, who had been described to me as a Signor Cavaliere Florimo. I thought that, with him, I might fill up the leisure time not quite unprofitably. And such was really the case. I found Signor Florimo an agreeable gentleman, who most readily and obligingly showed me the musical library under his care, and furnished me all the information I wished to obtain. We immediately plunged into a long conversation concerning the Institution, and I learned the following facts which may interest others as they interested me.

The present organization of the Naples Conservatory dates from the year 1806, it being then that Napoleon combined in one institution the four musical schools existing there at that period. These establishments, the history of some of which extends back as far as the middle of the 16th century, that is to say, occupies a period of 300 years, were: the Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini, the Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Christo, the Conservatorio di S. Onofrio, and the Conservatorio di S. Maria Loretto. It would appear from the above titles that all the schools of music in Naples in those days, just as that at present existing, were, to some extent, connected with monasteries of the town, if only in so far as to employ for the profit of art the spacious precincts of such edifices. But, however this may be, it is very certain that, in the last century, the Italian priesthood took a lively interest in the musical aspirations of this highly gifted nation of the South. I need merely remind the reader of Bologna, where people, for instance, still retain a lively recollection of Peter Martino, an authority on counterpoint, whom even a Mozart could not help respecting.

Since the year 1826, the Naples Conservatory has been located in the Franciscan Cloister of S. Pietro a Majella already named. It enjoys a fixed annual income of not less than 200,000 francs. On hearing this sum mentioned, I involuntarily thought, with some little depression, of the very straitened pecuniary circumstances of our German schools of music, some of which, so far from being able to do aught for the advancement of art can, literally speaking, scarcely manage to exist. It is true that we possess nearly half-a-dozen Conservatories, but we cannot, probably, suppose any one of them really endowed with vitality, except the Leipzig School of music, though it is very evident that this would prosper still more, if, in our native Germany, the door was not flung

wide open for a highly injurious system of competition on the part of private individuals. Let us hope, however, that this state of things may, some day or other, be changed for the better. What might not be effected by a single Conservatory, properly endowed and sensibly organized, for the whole of Germany!

The subjects of study in the Naples Conservatory include not only every branch of music, but other departments of knowledge as well. Besides going through an elementary course, the pupils are taught geography, history, and so on. Nay, they are even initiated in philosophy, though more for the name of the thing than aught else. In a country where, but a short time since, people were informed that it was not the earth that revolved round the sun, but the sun round the earth, we cannot expect that the science of reason will really flourish, even though we leave out of consideration the fact that the Italians, whose minds are cast in a preponderatingly realistic mould, have always been but very poor philosophers.

The pupils, of whom 100 are taught gratuitously, are bound to attend the Institution at least six years. In some cases, however, they remain longer. In addition to receiving artistic and scientific instruction, they are also not only lodged but boarded free of cost. No pupil is admitted under the age of seven, while, on the other hand, no one is allowed to attend the institution beyond his four-and-twentieth year. At present, the number of students is 150. The staff consists—not counting the director—of twenty-one professors. All the instruments and music required for the pupils belong to the Institution. Among the violins, I saw some very good, though not first-rate; specimens of Gagliani, the Neapolitan violin maker, who lived in the last century. The pianofortes, on the contrary, were bad. The wildest fancy cannot form a correct notion of the toneless, discordant, jingling machines, on which it is utterly impossible to play, that are manufactured here. But this is not an isolated case. Throughout Italy, the pianos are extremely mediocre, a fact in strong contrast with the feeling for tone inherent in the Italians, and based upon a felicitous natural aptitude of disposition.

During our conversation I was informed that the anxiously expected Sig. Pinto had arrived. I was immediately conducted to him. He most obligingly expressed his readiness to allow me to be present at the violin lesson he was about to give. We entered a room, in which some pupils were assembled. Here I could not help again remarking, as I had already remarked on my entry into the Institution, that too much attention was not bestowed upon cleanliness. All present, with the exception naturally of the Professor, looked unwashed and unkempt, and, moreover, as regards their dress, they seemed to be clad as if they had but just left their beds. The room itself, too, was not the tidiest I had ever seen. But what matters a little dirt more or less in the wonderfully bright, pure, and clear air of the South? Kind Nature paralyses it so marvellously, though, in saying this, I would not by any means be understood to assert that a little more attention to cleanliness would not be preferable. However, my attention was immediately diverted from this and similar matters, and directed to two pupils, each of whom played a violin solo, with pianoforte accompaniment. Both were admirable in the French-Belgian style, which is cultivated here with especial predilection and the devotion of elective affinity; for all Italian violinists adopt this style owing to the want of a national school. Yet, in this very country lived, as recently as the last century, those great masters of the violin, who marked an epoch and served as a standard for the whole world of music, and of whom we still learn, even at the present day, by tradition! However incredible this fact may appear, it is true.

Of the above two pupils, the second especially, who acquitted himself with extraordinary spirit and in the most masterly manner, engrossed my individual attention. He played that technically